

(a) West of Monhegan Island in the area located north of the line 43.5°42'08" N. lat., 69.5°34'18" W. long., and 43.5°42'15" N. lat., 69.5°19'18" W. long.

(b) East of Monhegan Island in the area located west of the line 43.5°44'00" N. lat., 69.5°15'05" W. long., and 43.5°48'10" N. lat., 69.5°08'01" W. long.

(c) South of Vinalhaven in the area located west of the line 43.5°52'21" N. lat., 68.5°39'54" W. long., and 43.5°48'10" N. lat., 67.5°40'33" W. long.

(d) South of Boris Bubert Island in the area located north of the line 44.5°19'15" N. lat., 67.5°49'30" W. long., and 44.5°23'45" N. lat., 67.5°40'33" W. long.

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50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 961126334-7025-02; I.D. 022897A]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska, Pollock in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is closing directed fishing for pollock by vessels catching

pollock for processing by the inshore component in the Eastern Regulatory Area in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the allocation of the total allowable catch (TAC) for pollock by vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the Eastern Regulatory Area.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 2, 1997, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas Pearson, 907-486-6919.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone is managed by NMFS according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

The final specification of the allocation of pollock to vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the GOA was established by the Final 1997 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (62 FR 8179, February 24, 1997) as 5,580 metric tons (mt), determined in accordance with § 679.20 (a)(6)(ii).

In accordance with § 679.20 (d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the allocation of the TAC of pollock to vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the Eastern Regulatory Area will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 5,480, and is setting aside the remaining 100 mt as bycatch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries. In accordance with § 679.20 (d)(1)(iii), the Regional Administrator finds that this directed fishing allowance will soon be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for pollock by vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the Eastern Regulatory Area.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts for applicable gear types may be found in the regulations at § 679.20(e) and (f).

Classification

This action is required by 50 CFR 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: February 28, 1997.

Bruce Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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